

A No. 7
SERMON

Preached in the High Church of *Edinburgh*, Monday, *January 1. 1733.*

Upon Occasion of the Anniversary Meeting of
the Society in *Scotland* for propagating **CHRISTIAN KNOWLEDGE;**

And published at their Request

By **JAMES SMITH** Professor of Divinity in
the University of *Edinburgh*, and one of the
Ministers of the City.



EDINBURGH, Printed by **R. FLEMING** and Company
for **ANDREW MARTIN**, and sold at his Shop in the
PARISH CHURCH. **MDCCLXXXIII.**



SERMON before the Society for
propagating Christian Knowledge,
January 1. 1733.

*On EPH. ii. 12. That at that Time ye were
without Christ, being Aliens from the
Common-wealth of Israel, and Strangers
from the Covenants of Promise, having
no Hope, and without God in the World.*



THE Knowledge of the Disease
is necessary for finding out and
applying the Remedy, and in
no Case more necessary than in
the great Disease of the Dark-
ness and Misery of our Souls:
It has pleased our gracious God
to put it into the Hearts of ma-
ny good Christians, of different Ranks, to think up-
on the wretched Condition of such as are in a State
of Ignorance and Alienation from God, and to im-
ploy their Pains and Substance for finding a Remedy;

dy; I therefore flatter my self, that it will not be unfit, on this Occasion, to speak of the Disease and Misery of ignorant unconverted Sinners, from the Words of the Apostle in our Text, *That at that Time ye were without Christ, being Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and Strangers from the Covenants of Promise, having no Hope, and without God in the World.* The Grammatical Sense must be made up by taking in the 11th Verse, in which you see the Apostle calls them to remember what they were before their Conversion to Christianity: And having, as the first and most obvious Thing, taken notice, that they were *uncircumcised Gentiles* in Opposition to the *Jews* who were circumcised, and were God's only visible Church; he calls them to remember what Condition they were in while in that State. *Remember*, says he, (for that Word is to be drawn down from the Beginning of the 11th Verse to this) *that at that Time ye were without Christ, being Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and Strangers from the Covenants of Promise, having no Hope, and without God in the World.*

It is evident, that the Subject which naturally falls to be discoursed upon from these Words, is, The wretched Condition of such as are ignorant of Christ and of the Way to Salvation by him, either by their being without the external Communion of the Church, or unconverted while they are within it. And in discoursing upon it, I shall endeavour, as the Lord enables, I. To speak of the miserable Condition of such as are without the Church, as it is here described in the Case of the unconverted *Ephesians*. II. Of the Condition of nominal Christians, who by Name are within the Church, but are
not

not converted. III. Of the Misery of both. IV. I shall make some Inferences from the whole.

I. I am to speak of the Condition of Men without the Church, as it is here described in several very strong Expressions: Of these Expressions there are five, which I shall run over and briefly explain as they ly in order.

1. The Apostle tells the *Ephesians* and calls them to remember it, *That at that Time*, to wit, the Time before their Conversion to Christianity, *they were without Christ*; without the true Knowledge of Christ, the only Messiah and Mediator betwixt God and Man; without any Union with him, and without all Communion with him in the Blessings of his Purchase. All who are without the Church are in this State, they are Strangers to Christ; utterly unacquainted with him, who is the only *Way, the Truth and the Life*; they neither truly know him, nor believe in him, nor have any Interest in him or Benefit by him. All that are without the Church are afar off from Christ, till they be brought near by his Blood, Eph. ii. 13.

2. *Being Aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel*. This is the next Article in the Description of the State of such as are without the Church; and with the other three that follow, especially as the Words are translated in our Version, may be considered as Proofs of the preceeding One: *You were without Christ, as being Aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel, Strangers from the Covenants of Promise*. 'Tis Misery enough to be without Christ, and the saving Knowledge of him; and to shew, that any Person or People are *without* him, and *Strangers* to him, is sufficient to shew that they are wretched and miserable. This Clause is the first, to shew

shew that they had *at that Time* been *without Christ*,
 because they had been *Aliens from the Common-
 wealth of Israel*, in which Christ was to be born,
 and to which he was particularly promised. The
 Common-wealth of *Israel* was founded in the Co-
 venant with *Abraham*, and in the Settlement of *Ja-
 cob's* Posterity made by *Moses*; by which the *Jews*
 were the only People of God upon Earth, the only
 form'd Society in which the Truths of God were
 truly taught, and the Privileges and Promises neces-
 sary to Fellowship with God were revealed and be-
 stowed. The *Jews*, by their Apostacy, forfeited this
 Privilege; and the Christian Church, consisting of
 believing *Jews* and *Gentiles*, succeeded in their
 Place: *Rom. xi. 17. And if some of the Branches*
be broken off, and thou being a wild Olive Tree,
wert grafted in amongst them, and with them partak-
est of the Root and Fatness of the Olive Tree: 1 *Pet.*
ii. 9. But ye are a chosen Generation, a Royal Priest-
hood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People, that ye
should shew forth the Praises of him who hath called
you out of Darkness into his marvelous Light: So
 that to be *Aliens from the Common-wealth of Israel*,
 is the same as to be without the Communion of the
 Church of God, and destitute of all her Privileges.
 The *Ephesians* before Conversion were *Aliens from*
this Common-wealth, or Establishment both in Church
 and State: And all unconverted *Gentiles* are Stran-
 gers to the true Church, and destitute of the Pri-
 vileges and Benefits of it; they are as Foreigners to
 a privileged Nation, as Aliens from an honourable
 and happy Family, and have no Title or Claim to
 the Benefits and Privileges of it: They cannot call
 God their *Father*, nor *Christ* their *Redeemer*, nor
Heaven their *Inheritance* thro' him; In all Respects
 they

they are *Aliens* from the Church and Family of God, till by Conversion they be brought into it. And then indeed there is an happy and glorious Change. *Eph. ii. 19, 20. Now therefore, ye are no more Strangers and Foreigners, but Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the Household of God; and are built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-stone*

3. *They are Strangers to the Covenants of Promise.* By the Covenant or Testament, as the Greek Word properly signifies, is meant the Covenant made with *Abraham*, wherein God promised to be a God unto him, and unto his Seed after him, *Gen. xvii. 7. And I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy Seed after thee, in their Generations, for an everlasting Covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee.* And this is called Covenants in the plural Number, because this Covenant was frequently renewed with *Abraham* himself, and with *Isaac* and *Jacob* his Descendants. One Covenant often renewed with some different Circumstances, is called Covenants. And it is called a Covenant of Promise, because it was founded in the precious Promises, which God made of a *Messias* to come, and of Salvation and eternal Happiness to be obtained thro' him. *Gen. xii. 3. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all Families of the Earth be blessed.* To this the *Ephefians* were Strangers before their Conversion, and so are all without the Church now. They are Strangers, not of the Family to which alone these Promises belong, not of the Society or Corporation to which that Charter is given; they have no more to do with them, while without the

the Church, than if they were of another Tribe of Beings, not of the Race of *Adam*. Hence followed,

4. That they were *without Hope*; without the Hope of eternal Happiness after Death, and of all the Blessings necessary unto it, Pardon, Peace and Renovation of Heart and Life: For what could they found their Hopes upon? Their own Consciences testified against them; the *Wrath of God* was in many Instances *revealed from Heaven against them*, in the Punishment of Sinners like themselves: They knew of no Mediator nor Satisfaction to Justice for making their Peace, nor of any supernatural Grace to conquer their Corruption, and to turn them from Sin; and without these there was no attaining to Happiness; so that they were without Hope, and so are all who at present are without the Church, they are in a hopeless and desperate State.

5. They were *without God*. In the Greek it is *Atheists*: Not that they were speculative Atheists, who denied and disputed against the Being of God, or that they denied any supreme Being to be honoured by religious Service; no, they served the Gods of the Nations, and the *Ephesians* particularly were Votaries of the Goddess *Diana*, Acts xix. 34, 35. *But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one Voice, about the Space of two Hours, cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians. And when the Town Clerk had appeased the People, he said, ye Men of Ephesus, What Man is there that knoweth not how that the City of the Ephesians is a Worshipper of the great Goddess Diana, and of the Image which fell down from Jupiter? But the Meaning is that they were without the true and saving Knowledge*

ledge of the one true God, and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ: And perhaps the just Commentary upon this Expression lies, *Gal. iv. 8. Howbeit, then when ye knew not God, ye did Service unto them which by Nature are no Gods. Rom. i. 21, 22, 23. Because that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became Fools: And changed the Glory of the uncorruptible God, into an Image made like to corruptible Man, and to Birds, and four-footed Beasts and creeping Things.* Thus they were without God, and so still are all without the Church of God; they are destitute of the true Knowledge of the only true God, they know not his glorious Perfections; they do not worship him in an acceptable manner, and for the most part do worship Idols, and many of them do worship the Devil, the worst of Beings and the greatest Enemy to the great God and our Saviour.

2. Nor are they in a better Condition, who, tho' they have the Name of Christians, are still unconverted: They are baptized, they are externally within the Church, but they are still in a State of Nature, and unacquainted with true regenerating and saving Grace. 'Tis evident from the Scriptures, that besides the external Profession of Religion, it is necessary that our Natures and our State be changed, *John iii. 3. Jesus answered and said unto him, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a Man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God. 2 Cor. v. 17. Therefore if any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature: Old Things are past away, behold, all Things are become new.* And while this Change is wanting, Men, tho' baptized

and bearing the Christian Name, are in no better State than such as are without the Church. For,

i. They are destitute of the true Knowledge of God; and of Jesus Christ the only Mediator betwixt God and Man. 1 Cor. ii. 14. *But the natural Man receiveth not the Things of the Spirit of God: For they are Foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.* Ev'n the most knowing and learned among unconverted Sinners, are ignorant of God and Christ: Tho' they have some speculative and superficial Knowledge of the Divine Nature, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is not true Knowledge, as not having in it a firm Persuasion of the Truth, nor a Heart-affecting Impression of these glorious Objects upon their Minds: They may talk sometimes of them with Learning and Eloquence, and alas! many of them learn to talk of them for that end, that they may talk and dispute against them; but all this is but a superficial useless and ineffectual Knowledge, they are still ignorant of God and Christ, and may justly be said to be *without Christ, and without God in the World.* But this is especially true of these poor Places in many Christian Countries, where the Inhabitants are in little better State than the Pagans themselves; as in many remote barbarous Places of our own Land, where, tho' the poor Inhabitants are perhaps baptized in their Infancy, yet, for want of Education when they come up, they are lost in Ignorance, and are as little acquainted with Christianity as if they had been born and lived in a Heathen Country, they know nothing of the *Power of Godliness*, and all their Religion consists in some superstitious Observances.

2. Unconverted Sinners are alienated from Spiritual and Divine Things, they do not apply their Thoughts to them but with Aversion; and, when they think of them, they do not relish them: Talk to them of a profitable Bargain, and their Heart rejoice within them; but speak to them of *laying up Treasures in Heaven*, and they shrug up their Shoulders, and will scarce deign to hear it: That may be well applied to them, which the Apostle says of the Heathen World, *Eph. iv. 18. That they are alienated from the Life of God, thro' the Ignorance that is in them.*

3. They have no Part in the Favour of God, nor in the Merits and Purchase of our Lord Jesus Christ. *They do not believe in him, and so have no Lot nor Part in these Things, Acts viii. 21.*

4. They are strongly averse from what is Good, and prone to what is Evil: They are constantly consulting in their Hearts how to break Christ's Bonds and to cast his Cords from them; and inwardly saying, *they will not have this Man to reign over them.* And this Corruption in the Heart, when it is ripened, fixeth into evil Habits, which work and exert themselves in the outward Practice. By these *they are clothed with the Works of Darknes*, *Rom. xiii. 12.* And many come the length mentioned by the Apostle, *Eph. iv. 19. Who being past feeling, have given themselves over into Lasciviousness, to work all Uncleaness with Greediness.* This is the Condition of unconverted Sinners for the most Part. And therefore,

5. They cannot, while they continue in that State, be saved: They believe not in Christ, they live in Opposition to his holy Commandments, and are in a State of Enmity with him, and therefore cannot

saved, *John vi. 36. But I said unto you, that ye also have seen me, and believe not.*

§ 6. They must certainly perish, and be miserable beyond all Expression, *John iii. 36. He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting Life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life; but the Wrath of God abideth on him. Luke xix. 27. But these mine Enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me. John iii. 18. He that believeth on him, is not condemned: But he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.*

After all this, it is easily understood in the third Place how miserable all unconverted Sinners, whether within or without the Church, must be.

I. They are destitute of all the Pleasure of spiritual Contemplation, and of beholding by Faith and believing Meditation the beautiful and blessed Scenes of the spiritual World. They know not what it is to behold *God in Christ reconciling the World to himself*: They see not Christ as Head of his spiritual Body, his Church, uniting all his Members to himself, and diffusing thro' them the Spiritual and Divine Life by the Influences of his Holy Spirit: They cannot partake of the Pleasure of beholding the blessed Intercourse betwixt God and his People, by mutual Fellowship: They cannot lift up their Eyes and behold, as God's People do, the Mansions of the Blessed, and the Glory of the Saints, and of our blessed Lord, which afterwards is to be more fully revealed. O! what Misery! Men of Study esteem the Pleasure of Contemplation as the greatest they ever enjoyed; and upon the Discovery of an unknown Truth have sacrificed *Hecatombs* to the Muses;

ses ; how much more pleasant must the Discovery and Contemplation of spiritual Things be ? How great then the Misery of the Want of it ? The unconverted are like brute Beasts, who know little more than Sensuality.

2. They are without the Pleasures of a holy Life, and of the Peace of a good Conscience. *Phil. iv. 7. And the Peace of God, which passeth all Understanding, shall keep your Hearts and Minds through Christ Jesus. Isai. lviii. 21. There is no Peace, saith my God, to the Wicked. Psal. cxix. 165. Great Peace have they which love thy Law ; and nothing shall offend them.*

3. They are destitute of the Pleasure and Joy of Fellowship and Communion with God in Christ, in which God in Christ manifests himself to the Soul, by the Influences of the Holy Spirit, and whereby the Soul is made to *rejoice with Joy unspeakable and full of Glory* : These transcendant Pleasures are reserved for such as love Christ and keep his Commandments. *Job. xiv. 21, 23. He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me : And he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and manifest my self to him. If a Man love me, he will keep my Words : And my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our Abode with him.* Of all these therefore the Unconverted are wholly destitute. O what Misery ! To be deprived of such glorious Pleasures, is a Misery infinitely greater than to be without the greatest Pleasures of Sense ; a greater Misery than to be without our daily Bread, nay even without Life it self : These temporal Things are but carnal and earthly, and afford but carnal and bodily Pleasure ; but Fellowship with God in Christ
affords

affords the purest and most refined Pleasure to the Soul, it assimilates our Souls to God, and prepares us for a State of absolute Perfection and complete Happiness.

4. Unregenerate Men are continually doing Evil: *The Imaginations of the Thoughts of their Hearts are evil, and only evil continually*; their Natures are wholly corrupted: And, as a corrupt Tree cannot produce good Fruit, so neither can a corrupted Nature put forth good Actions. Not only are their more gross Transgressions wicked; but their more indifferent Actions of human Life, which in their general Nature are lawful, in them are sinful. Even *the Plowing of the Wicked is Sin*, saith Solomon, Prov. xxi. 4. And what is the sad Effect of this? Even this, that they are daily hardening themselves more and more in their Sins. They are running deeper and deeper in the Score with God, and *treasuring up to themselves more and more Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God*. How wretched then and miserable must their Condition be for ever; unless, by the converting Grace of God's Holy Spirit, they be happily *turned from Darknefs unto Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God*?

5. In all the Calamities of this present Life, which are great and many, and of various Kinds, they have no true Ground of Hope of true Consolation under them, and of Deliverance from them; under Want of the Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life, they have no Ground to expect Supply, except the general Goodness of God, to which their own Consciences tell them they have no Title: Under the many Sins which they are daily committing, they have no Ground to hope for Pardon: And under
the

the Fear of Death, and the terrible Apprehensions of the Wrath of God, they have no Ground to hope for eternal Life in another World. So that all the Calamities of this Life, and all the Fears of Death; and all the Anxieties about an After-state fall upon them, with their full Weight, without the least Degree of true Hope to comfort them; and there remains nothing for them, but to lie down in Despair, and, instead of Hope, to entertain a *fearful Looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation*. They are *without Hope in the World*. O what a wretched Condition is this?

6. All unconverted Sinners are Subjects of the Kingdom of Satan: They are Slaves to that cruel Tyrant, who keeps them in the greatest Bondage, and entices them by the Pleasures of Sin, that he may afterward make them feel the Pains and Torments of it. *He is the God of this World.* 2 Cor. iv. 4. *And the Spirit that worketh in the Children of Disobedience.* Eph. ii. 2. O! how miserable are they who are under such a Dominion, and subject to such a terrible Monster of Wickedness, who tempts and seduces them to Sin, for no other End, but that he may maliciously triumph in their eternal Misery; and who has no Reward to bestow upon his Servants, for all the Drudgery which he makes them undergo, but a Share of these exquisite Torments which he himself suffers.

7. All impenitent and unconverted Sinners are under a Curse, the Curse of a holy and almighty God, who tells us by his holy Apostle, quoting the Words of Moses, *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all Things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them,* Gal. iii. 10. As long as we continue unconverted, this Curse stands in full Force

over

over our Heads, and we are liable to all the Calamities of Soul and Body, which an infinitely wise God can contrive, and an almighty God can inflict upon Creatures of our Frame. Now what a miserable State is this to be in?

This is a very uncomfortable and dismal Account of the State of unconverted Sinners. And we would have been glad to spare it, if it were not necessary: But such indeed is the Case, and it is better an unpleasant Truth should be told, than that a destructive Mistake should be entertained; 'tis better the Wound should be rip'd up, than that the miserable Patient should die of it and perish.

It remains that we should make Application of what has been said, by some Inferences.

Inference first, We see here great Ground for the wisest and best of Men to be humble. Whatever we are by Rank, whatever we are by intellectual Endowments or Attainments, whatever we are by Study or by Grace, we are by Nature *Children of Wrath*, we are *Strangers to the Covenants of Promise* when born; and while we live unconverted, we are *without God and without Christ in the World*. Shall we then ever presume to think highly of our selves? God forbid. Let us *be clothed with the deepest Humility*, 1 Pet. v. 5.

Inf. 2d. Let us highly esteem the Gospel, and a Gospel-Revelation, which delivers us from that State of gross Darkness and Alienation from God, which the Heathen World are under; and let us bless God for the glorious Gospel of his Son, whereby *Life and Immortality are brought to Light*, and a sure Way to eternal Salvation is made known. *Blessed is the People that know the joyful Sound; they shall*

shall walk, O Lord, in the Light of thy Countenance.
 Psal. lxxxix. 15.

Inf. 3d. Let this Doctrine allarm and excite all unconverted Sinners, to an earnest Concern for their eternal State: O Sinners! think of the dismal and perishing State in which you are, and never rest till you be *brought from Darknes to Light, and from the Power of Satan unto God.* Suffer me to address you, in the Words of our Lord himself. *Eph. v. 14. Awake thou that sleepest, and rise from the Dead, and Christ shall give thee Light.* Are you so mad, as to chuse Darknes rather than Light? Are you in Love with Bondage to Sin and Satan, preferably to the Liberty of the Children of God? Are you willing to be dead in Trespasses and Sins, rather than to be alive unto Righteousness through Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you willing to perish, rather than to live for ever? If you are, your Destruction will be of your selves; and this everlasting Gospel, which brings to you the joyful News of Salvation thro' a Saviour, will be a Witness against you, and condemn you. *Joh. iii. 19. And this is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men love Darknes rather than Light, because their Deeds are evil.* Consider this, and shew your selves Men: Turn from your Sins unto the Lord. Flee to the Merits of Jesus Christ, for the Pardon of your original and actual Sin; cry to a gracious God through him, that he may freely pardon all your Sins, and receive you graciously into his Favour: And, as you are capable, earnestly implore the plentiful Effusion of his almighty and victorious Grace, to turn you from Darknes to his marvelous Light; and to fulfil in you the good Pleasure of his Goodness. Who knows but that, when you are doing so, the Al-

mighty Angel may move the Waters, and you may be healed?

Inf. 4th. Let us, who are happily brought out of Darknels into Light by converting Grace, be thankful to our gracious God and blessed Redeemer, who has made us who were born blind to see, who has enabled us who were born lame to walk, and raised to Life us who were *dead in Trespasses and Sins*: *By Grace ye are saved*, Eph. ii. 5. And the least Return that can be expected from us, for so great and distinguishing a Blessing, is Gratitude and Praise.

Inf. 5th. Let us pity those who are in an ignorant and unconverted State, whether without or within the Church. Let our Hearts be moved and melt within us, at the Thoughts of miserable perishing Sinners. We pity the blind, the lame, the diseased, who are languishing under bodily Diseases, and dying of them. And why should we not pity those, who are perishing eternally under spiritual ones? Let us then pity them, and have Compassion upon them, and shew our Compassion in a proper Manner. And if you ask me how? I answer,

1. By praying for them, that God may enlighten them, and convert them by his Divine Grace, and may provide and direct the Means necessary for that happy End. Let us be earnest and importunate with him in Prayer, that he may *give Light to them that sit in Darkness, and in the Region and Shadow of Death*; that he may *make the dry Bones to live*, and raise from the Dead such as are *dead in Trespasses and Sins*.

2. Let us not grudge our own personal Pains and Labour in promoting so good a Work, as the instructing and converting Sinners. Our blessed Lord
God

God himself in our Nature, when on Earth, made this his great Business. *He went about doing Good*, Acts x. 38. to the Souls as well as the Bodies of Men. After him, his holy Apostles went throughout all Nations teaching and instructing Men in the Knowledge of the Gospel, and converting them to the Christian Faith: For this good End they spared no Pains nor Travel, they readily hazarded their Lives both by Sea and by Land; they underwent the greatest Hardships that human Nature could endure, and even cheerfully laid down their Lives for the effectual Instruction and Confirmation of Men in the Faith and Obedience of our holy Christian Religion. And that we may not have it to say, that these great Examples are too high to be imitated by us, let us remember that others like our selves have copied after them: Of whom I do not know a more worthy and commendable Instance, than that eminent Servant of God, Mr. *John Elliot*, a Minister of the Gospel in *New-England*, who spent much of his Time and Pains in instructing and converting the wild *Indians* about *New-England* betwixt the Years 1646 and 1687; this good and holy Man with unwearied Study learned the hard and barbarous Language of the *Indians*, till he could preach in it; he with incredible Pains translated the holy Scriptures into that Language. He grudged not to bear the greatest Fatigue, and to suffer the greatest Hardships in going through the Country preaching the Gospel to these poor Heathens: And it pleased God so to bless his Labours that he lived to see four and twenty Congregation of *Indians* professing the Name of Christ, and twenty four *Indians* preaching the Gospel among them besides several *English* Preachers who spoke the *In*

dian Language. And shall not we according to our Opportunities, be ready to lay out our Pains and Labour for the converting and saving of perishing Sinners? We are not all called to be Preachers or Evangelists, but we are called, as we have Occasion, to save Souls from Death, by our Example, Instruction and Admonition in a private Way; and by encouraging others to do in a more publick manner, what we our selves are not capable of doing in Person.

3. Let us *honour the Lord with our Substance* in this, and liberally contribute to the Charges necessary for instructing the ignorant both at Home and Abroad. If we cannot do it from a plentiful and overflowing Estate, let us save it from the unlawful Pleasures of sensual Love, and from the Charges of a gaudy and splendid Dress; and from the vain Diversions of Balls and Comedies, which have come but lately to be known in this Country, and yet there is more bestowed upon these by many than upon this pious Design of propagating Christian Knowledge; I cannot say this without much Regrete and Grief of Mind, for my beloved Countrymen who so far misplace their Expences; and shall say for their Conviction, if they will hearken to it, that one Soul saved from Ignorance and Misery by our Means, will add infinitely more to our Glory in the End, than all our worldly Ornaments can add to our Splendor and Magnificence in this present Life, and will give us more Joy upon Reflection than all these passing Pleasures can.

Inf. 6th. Let us bless God who puts it into the Hearts of so many worthy Persons, of different Stations and Characters, to labour so unweariedly in so useful a Work as the propagating of Christian Know-

Knowledge both at Home and Abroad. Here I might justly and without any Flattery, expatiate in the Praises of the Honourable and Reverend Members of this excellent Society: I might speak to the Praise of the Honourable Person * who sits at their Head, and who, notwithstanding of his great Age, and a great Load of Business, unweariedly labours in taking Care of that pious Work. I might speak of the Care and ready Attendance of other Honourable Persons of the same Bench, and of worthy Gentlemen of other Characters and Denominations; but as I know that they serve in this pious Work from a more noble Principle, than the Love of human Praises, I shall wholly wave this rich and copious Part of the Subject, having detained you too long already. Suffer me only to add, for the Encouragement of the honourable and worthy Members of this Society, and to excite them to Perseverance in their Duty, the Words of the Apostle, *Gal. vi. 9. And let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due Season we shall reap, if we faint not.*

And further, for encouraging others to contribute, I doubt not it appears by Experience, that they who are able and willing to make Donations or Mortifications for pious Uses, cannot employ their Money any where with a more certain Prospect of its being faithfully and disinterestedly employed for the laudable Design, than with the *Society for propagating Christian Knowledge*. I can say it freely and without all Flattery, that I never knew any publick Design managed in a more honest and disinterested Man-

* The Honourable Sir *Hew Dalrymple* Lord President of the Session.

Manner than this is, and always has been, now for a long Tract of Years. And therefore all whom God has enabled, may freely contribute with a liberal Hand, being secure against Embezzlements, and assured upon the best Grounds, that their Money shall be employed for the pious Purpose for which they give it, of propagating the Knowledge of the Gospel of God. At the same Time our Encouragement otherwise to promote this good Design is great: The Blessing of God seems visibly to accompany the pious Design of propagating the Gospel: The Protestant Missions to the *East Indies* have been and still are remarkably successful: Some of our Brethren in *Ireland*, are prosecuting the same good Design: Many worthy Gentlemen at *London* are stretching forth their Hands to join with us, and help us in this Work, and have already been at great Pains to procure Contributions and Donations to it, not without considerable Success; the Endeavours of the Society here have been remarkably blessed of God, not only for spreading the Knowledge of the Gospel in the remote and barbarous Places of our own Country, but are beginning to take place in *America* also. What promising Appearances are these? And what Encouragement do they give us to contribute? What if this be the dawning of these happy Times, *When the Earth shall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea*, Isa. xi. 9. and *when the Kingdoms of this World, are to become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ*, Rev. xi. 15. And what an Honour will it be for us to have a Hand in so glorious a Work?

If it be asked, when shall these Demands of Contributions end? I answer, never till the good Design

sign of them be accomplished, to wit, the Conversion of ignorant and unbelieving Sinners to the Knowledge and Faith of the Gospel, as far as our Power and Influence can possibly reach. We have no Reason to grudge, tho' we should be still contributing from Time to Time, as we can spare it, to our Life's End: God is still blessing us with new Returns of his Favour throughout the returning Days and Years of our Life; and this very Day has entered us into a new Year after all the Years we have formerly misimproved; and tho' many of our Friends and Neighbours are at present under great Affliction, yet we are in comfortable Circumstances; and concerning many of our Friends we have Encouragement to hope that they shall recover. And shall we grudge to bestow a Part of what he so freely gives us, towards the Conversion of poor Sinners, for whom, for what we know, *Christ died*. I conclude with reading the Apostle's Words, *1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19. Charge them that are rich in this World, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain Riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all Things to enjoy: That they do Good, that they be rich in good Works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in Store for themselves a good Foundation against the Time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal Life.*

F I N I S.





